



HUGH WALPOLE

A NATURAL STORYTELLER

ESSENTIAL NOVELISTS

TACET BOOKS

ESSENTIAL NOVELISTS

Hugh Walpole

EDITED BY

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Author

Sir Hugh Seymour Walpole, CBE (13 March 1884 – 1 June 1941) was an English novelist. He was the son of an Anglican clergyman, intended for a career in the church but drawn instead to writing. Among those who encouraged him were the authors Henry James and Arnold Bennett. His skill at scene-setting and vivid plots, as well as his high profile as a lecturer, brought him a large readership in the United Kingdom and North America. He was a best-selling author in the 1920s and 1930s but has been largely neglected since his death.

After his first novel, *The Wooden Horse*, in 1909, Walpole wrote prolifically, producing at least one book every year. He was a spontaneous story-teller, writing quickly to get all his ideas on paper, seldom revising. His first novel to achieve major success was his third, *Mr Perrin and Mr Traill*, a tragicomic story of a fatal clash between two schoolmasters. During the First World War he served in the Red Cross on the Russian-Austrian front, and worked in British propaganda in Petrograd and London. In the 1920s and 1930s Walpole was much in demand not only as a novelist but also as a lecturer on literature, making four exceptionally well-paid tours of North America.

As a gay man at a time when homosexual practices were illegal for men in Britain, Walpole conducted a succession of intense but discreet relationships with other men, and was for much of his life in search of what he saw as "the perfect friend". He eventually found one, a married policeman, with whom he settled in the English Lake District. Having as a young man eagerly sought the support of established authors, he was in his later years a generous sponsor of many younger writers. He was a patron of the visual arts

and bequeathed a substantial legacy of paintings to the Tate Gallery and other British institutions.

Walpole's output was large and varied. Between 1909 and 1941 he wrote thirty-six novels, five volumes of short stories, two original plays and three volumes of memoirs. His range included disturbing studies of the macabre, children's stories and historical fiction, most notably his Herries Chronicle series, set in the Lake District. He worked in Hollywood writing scenarios for two Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer films in the 1930s, and played a cameo in the 1935 version of David Copperfield.

The Wooden Horse

CHAPTER I

Robin Trojan was waiting for his father.

Through the open window of the drawing-room came, faintly, the cries of the town—the sound of some distant bell, the shout of fishermen on the quay, the muffled beat of the mining-stamps from Porth-Vennic, a village that lay two miles inland. There yet lingered in the air the faint afterglow of the sunset, and a few stars, twinkling faintly in the deep blue of the night sky, seemed reflections of the orange lights of the herring-boats, flashing far out to sea.

The great drawing-room, lighted by a cluster of electric lamps hanging from the ceiling, seemed to flaunt the dim twinkle of the stars contemptuously; the dark blue of the walls and thick Persian carpets sounded a quieter note, but the general effect was of something distantly, coldly superior, something indeed that was scarcely comfortable, but that was, nevertheless, fulfilling the exact purpose for which it had been intended.

And that purpose was, most certainly, not comfort. Robin himself would have smiled contemptuously if you had pleaded for something homely, something suggestive of roaring fires and cosy armchairs, instead of the stiff-backed, beautifully carved Louis XIV. furniture that stood, each chair and table rigidly in its appointed place, as though bidding defiance to any one bold enough to attempt alterations.

The golden light in the sky shone faintly in at the open window, as though longing to enter, but the dazzling brilliance of the room seemed to fling it back into the blue dome of sea and sky outside.

Robin was standing by a large looking-glass in the corner of the room trying to improve the shape of his tie; and it was characteristic of him that, although he had not seen his father for eighteen years, he was thinking a great deal more about his tie than about the approaching meeting.

He was, at this time, twenty years of age. Tall and dark, he had all the Trojan characteristics; small, delicately shaped ears; a mouth that gave signs of all the Trojan obstinacy, called by the Trojans themselves family pride; a high, well-shaped forehead with hair closely cut and of a dark brown. He was considered by most people handsome—but to some his eyes, of the real Trojan blue, were too cold and impassive. He gave you the impression of some one who watched, rather disdainfully, the ill-considered and impulsive actions of his fellow-men.

He was, however, exactly suited to his surroundings. He maintained the same position as the room with regard to the world in general—"We are Trojans; we are very old and very expensive and very, very good, and it behoves you to recognise this fact and give way with fitting deference."

He had not seen his father for eighteen years, and, as he had been separated from him at the unimpressible age of two, he may be said never to have seen him at all. He had no recollection of him, and the picture that he had painted was constructed out of monthly rather uninteresting letters concerned, for the most part, with the care and maintenance of New Zealand sheep, and such meagre details as his Aunt Clare and Uncle Garrett had bestowed on him from time to time. From the latter he gathered that his father had been, in his youth, in some vague way, unsatisfactory, and had departed to Australia to seek his fortune, with a clear understanding from his father that he was not to return thence until he had found it.

Robin himself had been born in New Zealand, but his mother dying when he was two years old, he had been sent home to be brought up, in the proper Trojan manner, by his aunt and uncle.

On these things Robin reflected as he tried to twist his tie into a fitting Trojan shape; but it refused to behave as a well-educated tie should, and the obvious thing was to get another. Robin looked at his watch. It was really extremely provoking; the carriage had been timed to arrive at half-past six exactly; it was now a quarter to seven and no one had appeared. There was probably not time to search for another tie. His father would be certain to arrive at the very moment when one tie was on and the other not yet on, which meant that Robin would be late; and if there was one thing that a Trojan hated more than another it was being late. With many people unpunctuality was a fault, with a Trojan it was a crime; it was what was known as an "odds and ends"—one of those things, like untidiness, eating your fish with a steel knife and wearing a white tie with a short dinner-jacket, that marked a man, once and for all, as some one outside the pale, an impossible person.

Therefore Robin allowed his tie to remain and walked to the open window.

"At any rate," he said to himself, still thinking of his tie, "father won't probably notice it." He wondered how much his father *would* notice. "As he's a Trojan," he thought, "he'll know the sort of things that a fellow ought to do, even though he has been out in New Zealand all his life."

It would, Robin reflected, be a very pretty little scene. He liked scenes, and, if this one were properly manoeuvred, he ought to be its very interesting and satisfactory centre. That was why it was really a pity about the tie.

The door from the library swung slowly open, and Sir Jeremy Trojan, Robin's grandfather, was wheeled into the room.

He was very old indeed, and the only part of his face that seemed alive were his eyes; they were continually darting from one end of the room to the other, they were never still; but, for the rest, he scarcely moved. His skin was dried and brown like a mummy's, and even when he spoke, his lips hardly stirred. He was in evening dress, his legs wrapped tightly in rugs; his chair was wheeled by a servant who was evidently perfectly trained in all the Trojan ways of propriety and decorum.

"Well, grandfather," said Robin, turning back from the window with the look of annoyance still on his face, "how are you to-night?" Robin always shouted at his grandfather although he knew perfectly well that he was not deaf, but could, on the other hand, hear wonderfully well for his age. Nothing annoyed his grandfather so much as being shouted at, and of this Robin was continually reminded.

"Tut, tut, boy," said Sir Jeremy testily, "one would think that I was deaf. Better? Yes, of course. Close the windows!"

"I'll ring for Marchant," said Robin, moving to the bell, "he ought to have done it before." Sir Jeremy said nothing—it was impossible to guess at his thoughts from his face; only his eyes moved uneasily round the room.

He was wheeled to his accustomed corner by the big open stone fireplace, and he lay there, motionless in his chair, without further remark.

Marchant came in a moment later.

"The windows, Marchant," said Robin, still twisting uneasily at his tie, "I think you had forgotten."

"I am sorry, sir," Marchant answered, "but Mr. Garrett had spoken this morning of the room being rather close. I had thought that perhaps——"

He moved silently across the room and shut the window, barring out the fluttering yellow light, the sparkling silver of the stars, the orange of the fishing-boats, the murmured distance of the town.

A few moments later Clare Trojan came in. Although she had never been beautiful she had always been interesting, and indeed she was (even when in the company of women far more beautiful than herself) always one of the first to whom men looked. This may have been partly accounted for by her very obvious pride, the quality that struck the most casual observer at once, but there was also an air of indifference, a look in the eyes that seemed to pique men's curiosity and stir their interest. It was not for lack of opportunity that she was still unmarried, but she had never discovered the man who had virtue and merit sufficient to cover the obvious disadvantages of his not having been born a Trojan. Middle age suited the air of almost regal dignity with which she moved, and people who had known her for many years said that she had never looked so well as now. To-night, in a closely-fitting dress of black silk relieved by a string of pearls round her neck, and a superb white rose at her breast, she was almost handsome. Robin watched her with satisfaction as she moved towards him.

"Ah, it's cold," she said. "I know Marchant left those windows open till the last moment. Robin, your tie is shocking. It looks as if it were made-up."

"I know," said Robin, still struggling with it; "but there isn't time to get another. Father will be here at any moment. It's late as it is. Yes, I told Marchant to shut the windows, he said

something about Uncle Garrett's saying it was stuffy or something."

"Harry's late." Clare moved across to her father and bent down and kissed him.

"How are you to-night, father?" but she was arranging the rose at her breast and was obviously thinking more of its position than of the answer to her question.

"Hungry—damned hungry," said Sir Jeremy.

"Oh, we'll have to wait," said Clare. "Harry's got to dress. Anyhow you've got no right to be hungry at a quarter to seven. Nobody's ever hungry till half-past seven at the earliest."

It was evident that she was ill at ease. Perhaps it was the prospect of meeting her brother after a separation of eighteen years; perhaps it was anxiety as to how this reclaimed son of the house of Trojan would behave in the face of the world. It was so very important that the house should not be in any way let down, that the dignity with which it had invariably conducted its affairs for the last twenty years should be, in no way, impaired. Harry had been anything but dignified in his early days, and sheep-farming in New Zealand—well, of course, one knew what kind of life that was.

But, as she looked across at Robin, it was easy to see that her anxiety was, in some way, connected with him. How was this invasion to affect her nephew? For eighteen years she had been the only father and mother that he had known, for eighteen years she had educated him in all the Trojan laws and traditions, the things that a Trojan must speak and do and think, and he had faithfully responded to her instruction. He was in every way everything that a Trojan should be; but there had been moments, rare indeed and

swiftly passing, when Clare had fancied that there were other impulses, other ideas at work. She was afraid of those impulses, and she was afraid of what Henry Trojan might do with regard to them.

It was, indeed, hard, after reigning absolutely for eighteen years, to yield her place to another, but perhaps, after all, Robin would be true to his early training and she would not be altogether supplanted.

"Randal comes to-morrow," said Robin suddenly, after a few minutes' silence. "Unfortunately he can only stop for a few days. His paper on 'Pater' has been taken by the *National*. He's very much pleased, of course."

Robin spoke coldly and without any enthusiasm. It was not considered quite good form to be enthusiastic; it was apt to lead you into rather uncertain company with such people as Socialists and the Salvation Army.

"I'm glad he's coming—quite a nice fellow," said Clare, looking at the gold clock on the mantelpiece. "The train is shockingly late. On 'Pater' you said! I must try and get the *National*—Miss Ponsonby takes it, I think. It's unusual for Garrett to be unpunctual."

He entered at the same moment—a tall, thin man of forty years of age, clean shaven and rather bald, with a very slight squint in the right eye. He walked slowly, and always gave the impression that he saw nothing of his surroundings. For the rest, he was said to be extremely cynical and had more than a fair share of the Trojan pride.

"The train is late," he said, addressing no one in particular. "Father, how are you this evening?"

This third attack on Sir Jeremy was repelled by a snort, which Garrett accepted as an answer. "Robin, your tie is

atrocious," he continued, picking up the *Times* and opening it slowly; "you had better change it."

Robin was prevented from answering by the sound of carriage-wheels on the drive. Clare rose and stood by the fireplace near Sir Jeremy; Garrett read to the end of the paragraph and folded the paper on his knee; Robin fingered his watch-chain nervously and moved to his aunt's side—only Sir Jeremy remained motionless and gave no sign that he had heard.

Perhaps he was thinking of that day twenty years before when, after a very heated interview, he had forbidden his son to see his face again until he had done something that definitely justified his existence. Harry had certainly done several things since then that justified his existence; he had, for one thing, made a fortune, and that was not so easily done nowadays. Harry was five-and-forty now; he must be very much changed; he had steadied down, of course ... he would be well able to take his place as head of the family when Sir Jeremy himself....

But he gave no sign. You could not tell that he had heard the carriage-wheels at all; he lay motionless in his chair with his eyes half closed.

There were voices in the hall. Beldam's superlatively courteous tones as of one who is ready to die to serve you, and then another voice—rather loud and sharp, but pleasant, with the sound of a laugh in it.

"They are in the blue drawing-room, sir—Mr. Henry," Beldam's voice was heard on the stairs, and, in a moment, Beldam himself appeared—"Mr. Henry, Sir Jeremy." Then he stood aside, and Henry Trojan entered the room.

Clare made a step forward.

"Harry—old boy—at last———"

Both her hands were outstretched, but he disregarded them, and, stepping forward, crushed her in his arms, crushed her dress, crushed the beautiful rose at her breast, and, bending down, kissed her again and again.

"Clare—after twenty years!"

He let her go and she stepped back, still smiling, but she touched the rose for a moment and her hair. He was very strong.

And then there was a little pause. Harry Trojan turned and faced his father. The old man made no movement and gave no sign, but he said, his lips stirring very slightly, "I am glad to see you here again, Harry."

The man flushed, and with a little stammer answered, "I am gladder to be back than you can know, father."

Sir Jeremy's wrinkled hand appeared from behind the rugs, and the two men shook in silence.

Then Garrett came forward. "You're not much changed, Harry," he said with a laugh, "in spite of the twenty years."

"Why, Garrie!" His brother stepped towards him and laid a hand on his shoulder. "It's splendid to see you again. I'd almost forgotten what you were like—I only had that old photo, you know—of us both at Rugby."

Robin had stood aside, in a corner by the fireplace, watching his father. It was very much as he had expected, only he couldn't, try as he might, think of him as his father at all. The man there who had kissed Aunt Clare and shaken hands with Sir Jeremy was, in some unexplained way, a little odd and out of place. He was big and strong; his hair curled a little and was dark brown, like Robin's, and his eyes were

blue, but, in other respects, there was very little of the Trojan about him. His mouth was large, and he had a brown, slightly curling moustache. Indeed the general impression was brown in spite of the blue, badly fitting suit. He was deeply tanned by the sun and was slightly freckled.

He would have looked splendid in New Zealand or Klondyke, or, indeed, anywhere where you worked with your coat off and your shirt open at the neck; but here, in that drawing-room, it was a pity, Robin thought, that his father had not stopped for two or three days in town and gone to a West End tailor.

But, after all, it was a very nice little scene. It really had been quite moving to see him kiss Clare like that, but, at the same time, for his part, kissing...!

"And Robin?" said Harry.

"Here's the son and heir," said Garrett, laughing, and pushing Robin forward.

Now that the moment had really come, Robin was most unpleasantly embarrassed. How foolish of Uncle Garrett to try and be funny at a time like that, and what a pity it was that his tie was sticking out at one end so much farther than at the other. He felt his hand seized and crushed in the grip of a giant; he murmured something about his being pleased, and then, suddenly, his father bent down and kissed him on the forehead.

They were both blushing, Robin furiously. How he hated sentiment! He felt sure that Uncle Garrett was laughing at him.

"By Jove, you're splendid!" said Harry, holding him back with both his hands on his shoulders. "Pretty different from the

nipper that I sent over to England eighteen years ago. Oh, you'll do, Robin."

"And now, Harry," said Clare, laughing, "you'll go and dress, won't you? Father's terribly hungry and the train was late."

"Right," said Harry; "I won't be long. It's good to be back again."

When the door had closed behind him, there was silence. He gave the impression of some one filled with overwhelming, rapturous joy. There was a light in his eyes that told of dreams at length fulfilled, and hopes, long and wearily postponed, at last realised. He had filled that stiff, solemn room with a spirit of life and strength and sheer animal good health—it was even, as Clare afterwards privately confessed, a little exhausting.

Now she stood by the fireplace, smiling a little. "My poor rose," she said, looking at some of the petals that had fallen to the ground. "Harry is strong!"

"He is looking well," said Garrett. It sounded almost sarcastic.

Robin went up to his room to change his tie—he had said nothing about his father.

As Harry Trojan passed down the well-remembered passages where the pictures hung in the same odd familiar places, past staircases vanishing into dark abysses that had frightened him as a child, windows deep-set in the thick stone walls, corners round which he had crept in the dark on his way to his room, it seemed to him that those long, dreary years of patient waiting in New Zealand were as nothing, and that it was only yesterday that he had passed down that same way, his heart full of rage against his father, his one longing to get out and away to other

countries where he should be his own master and win his own freedom. And now that he was back again, now that he had seen what that freedom meant, now that he had tasted that same will-o'-the-wisp liberty, how thankful he was to rest here quietly, peacefully, for the remainder of his days; at last he knew what were the things that were alone, in this world, worth striving for—not money, ambition, success, but love for one's own little bit of country that one called home, the patient resting in the heritage of all those accumulating traditions that ancestors had been making, slowly, gradually, for centuries of years.

He had hoped that he would have the same old rooms at the top of the West Towers that he had had when a boy; he remembered the view of the sea from their windows—the great sweep of the Cornish coast far out to Land's End itself, and the gulls whirring with hoarse cries over his head as he leant out to view the little cove nestling at the foot of the Hall. That view, then, had meant to him distant wonderful lands in which he was to make his name and his fortune: now it spoke of home and peace, and, beyond all, of Cornwall.

They had put him in one of the big spare rooms that faced inland. As he entered the sense of its luxury filled him with a delicious feeling of comfort: the log-fire burning in the open brown-tiled fireplace, the softness of the carpets, the electric light, shaded to a soft glow—ah! these were the things for which he had waited, and they had, indeed, been worth waiting for.

His man was laying his dress-clothes on his bed.

"What is your name?" he said, feeling almost a little shy; it was so long since he had had things done for him.

"James Treduggan, sir," the man answered, smiling. "You won't remember me, sir, I expect. I was quite a youngster when you went away. But I've been in service here ever since I was ten."

When Harry was left alone, he stood by the fire, thinking. He had been preparing for this moment for so long that now that it was actually here he was frightened, nervous. He had so often imagined that first arrival in England, the first glimpse of London; then the first meeting and the first evening at home. Of course, all his thoughts had centred on Robin—everything else had been secondary, but he had, in some unaccountable way, never been able to realise exactly what Robin would be. He had had photographs, but they had been unsatisfactory and had told him nothing; and now that he had seen him, he was at rest; he was all that he had hoped—straight, strong, manly, with that clear steady look in the eyes that meant so much; yes, there was no doubt about his son. He remembered Robin's mother with affectionate tenderness; she had been the daughter of a doctor in Auckland—he had fallen in love with her at once and married her, although his prospects had been so bad. They had been very happy, and then, when Robin was two years old, she had died; the boy had been sent home, and he had been alone again—for eighteen years he had been alone. There had been other women, of course; he did not pretend to have been a saint, and women had liked him and been rather sorry for him in those early years; but they had none of them been very much to him, only episodes—the central fact of his existence had always been his son. He had had a friend there, a Colonel Durand, who had three sons of his own, and had given him much advice as to his treatment of Robin. He had talked a great deal about the young generation, about its impatience of older theories and manners, its dislike of authority and restraint; and Harry, remembering his own early hatred of restriction and

longing for freedom, was determined that he would be no fetter on his son's liberty, that he would be to him a friend, a companion rather than a father. After all, he felt no more than twenty-five—there was really no space of years between them—he was as young to-day as he had been twenty years ago.

As to the others, he had never cared very much for Clare and Garrett in the old days; they had been stiff, cold, lacking all sense of family affection. But that had been twenty years ago. There had been a time, in New Zealand, when he had hated Garrett. When he had been away from home for some ten years, the longing to see his boy had grown too strong to be resisted, and he had written to his father asking for permission to return. He had received a cold answer from Garrett, saying that Sir Jeremy thought that, as he was so successful there, it would be perhaps better if he remained there a little while longer; that he would find little to do at home and would only weary of the monotony—four closely written pages to the same effect. So Harry had remained.

But that was ten years ago. At last, a letter had come, saying that Sir Jeremy was now very old and feeble, that he desired to see his son before he died, and that all the past was forgotten and forgiven. And now there was but one thought in his heart—love for all the world, one overwhelming desire to take his place amongst them decently, worthily, so that they might see that the wastrel of twenty years ago had developed into a man, able to take his place, in due time, at the head of the Trojan family. Oh! how he would try to please them all! how he would watch and study and work so that that long twenty years' exile might be forgotten both by himself and by them.

He bathed and dressed slowly by the fire. As he saw his clothes on the bed he fancied, for a moment, that they might be a little worn, a little old. They had seemed very

good and smart in Auckland, but in England it was rather different. He almost wished that he had stayed in London for two days and been properly fitted by a tailor. But then he had been so eager to arrive, he had not thought of clothes; his one idea had been to rush down as soon as possible and see them all, and the place, and the town.

Then he remembered that Clare had asked him to be quick. He finished his dressing hurriedly, turned out the electric light, and left the room.

He was pleased to find that he had not forgotten the turns and twists of the house. He threaded the dark passages easily, humming a little tune, and smelling that same sweet scent of dried rose leaves that he had known so well when he was a small boy. He could see, in imagination, the great white-and-pink china pot-pourri bowls standing at the corner of the stairs—nothing was changed.

The blue drawing-room was deserted when he entered it—only the blaze of the electric light, the golden flame of the log-fire in the great open fireplace, and the solemn ticking of the gold clock that had stood there, in the same place of honour, for the last hundred years. He passed over to the windows and flung them open; the hum of the town came, with the cold night air, into the room. The stars were brilliant to-night and the golden haze of the lamplight hung over the streets like a magic curtain. Ah! how good it was! The peace of it, the comfort, the homeliness!

Above all, it was Cornwall—the lights of the herring fleet, the distant rhythmical beat of the mining-stamps, that peculiar scent as of precious spices coming with the wind of the sea, as though borne from distant magical lands, all told him that he was, at last, again in Cornwall.

He drank in the night air, bending his eyes on the town as though he were saluting it again, tenderly, joyously, with the greeting of an old familiar friend.

Robin closed the door behind him and shivered a little. The windows were open—how annoying when Aunt Clare had especially asked that they should be closed. Oh! it was his father! Of course, he did not know!

He had not been noticed, so he coughed. Harry turned round.

"Hullo, Robin, my boy!" He passed his arm through his son's and drew him to the window. "Isn't it splendid?" he said. "Oh! I don't suppose you see it now, after having been here all this time; you want to go away for twenty years, then you'd know how much it's worth. Oh! it's splendid—what times we'll have here, you and I!"

"Yes," said Robin, a little coldly. It was very chilly with the window open, and there was something in all that enthusiasm that was almost a little vulgar. Of course, it was natural, after being away so long ... but still.... Also his father's clothes were really very old—the back of the coat was quite shiny.

Sir Jeremy entered in his chair, followed by Clare and Garrett.

Clare gave a little scream.

"Oh! How cold!" she cried. "Now whoever——!"

"I'm afraid I was guilty," said Harry, laughing. "The town looked so splendid and I hadn't seen it for so long. I——"

"Of course, I forgot," said Clare. "I don't suppose you notice open windows in New Zealand, because you're always outside in the Bush or something. But here we're as shivery

as you make them. Dinner's getting shivery too. The sooner we go down the better."

She passed back through the door and down the hall. There was no doubt that she was a magnificent woman.

As Sir Jeremy was wheeled through the doors he gripped Harry's hand. "I'm damned glad that you're back," he whispered.

Robin, who was the last to leave the room, closed the windows and turned out the lights. The room was in darkness save for the golden light of the leaping fire.

CHAPTER II

It had been called the "House of the Flutes" since the beginning of time. People had said that the name was absurd, and Harry's grandfather, a prosaic gentleman of rather violent radical opinions, had made a definite attempt at a change—but he had failed. Trojans had appeared from every part of the country, angry Trojans, tearful Trojans, indignant Trojans, important Trojans, poor-relation Trojans, and had, one and all, demanded that the name should remain, and that the headquarters of the Trojan tradition, of the Trojan power, should continue to be the "House of the Flutes."

Of course, it had its origin in tradition. In the early days when might was right, and the stronger seized the worldly goods of the weaker and nobody said him nay, there had been a Sir Jeremy Trojan whose wife had been the talk of the country-side both because of her beauty and also because of her easy morals. Sir Jeremy having departed on a journey, the lovely Lady Clare entertained a neighbouring baron at her husband's bed and board, and for two days all was well. But Sir Jeremy unexpectedly returned, and, being a gentleman of a pleasant fancy, walled up the room in which he had found the erring couple and left them inside. He then sat outside, and listened with a gentle pleasure to their cries, and, being a musician of no mean quality, played on the flute from time to time to prevent the hours from being wearisome. For three days he sat there, until there came no more sounds from that room; then he pursued his ordinary affairs, but sought no other wife—a grim little man with a certain sense of humour.

There are many other legends connected with the house; you will find them in Baedeker, where it also says: "Kind

permission is accorded by Sir Henry Trojan to visitors who desire to see the rooms during the residence of the family in London. Special attention should be paid to the gold Drawing-room with its magnificent carving, the Library with its fine collection of old prints, and the Long Gallery with the family portraits, noticing especially the Vandyke of Sir Hilary Trojan (*temp.* Ch. I.), and a little sketch by Turner of the view from the West Tower. The gardens, too, are well worth a short inspection, special mention being made of the Long Terrace with its magnificent sea-view.

"A small charge is made by Sir Henry for admittance (adults sixpence, children half-price), with a view to benefiting the church, a building recently restored and sadly in need of funds."

So far Baedeker (Cornwall, new ed., 1908). The house is astonishingly beautiful, seen from any point of view. Added to from time to time, it has that air of surprise, as of a building containing endless secrets, only some of which it intends to reveal. It is full of corners and angles, and at the same time preserves a symmetry and grandeur of style that is surprising, if one considers its haphazard construction and random additions.

Part of its beauty is undoubtedly owing to its superb position. It rises from the rock, over the grey town at its feet, like a protecting deity, its two towers to west and east, raised like giant hands, its grey walls rising sheer from the steep, shelving rock; behind it the gentle rise of hills, bending towards the inland valleys; in front of it an unbroken stretch of sea.

It strikes the exact note that is in harmony with its colour and surroundings: the emblem of some wild survival from dark ages when that spot had been one of the most uncivilised in the whole of Britain—a land of wild, uncouth

people, living in a state of perpetual watch and guard, fearing the sea, fearing the land, cringingly superstitious because of their crying need of supernatural defence; and, indeed, there is nothing more curious in the Cornwall of to-day than this perpetual reminder of past superstitions, dead gods, strange pathetic survival of heathen ancestry.

The town of Pendragon, lying at the foot of the "House of the Flutes," had little of this survival of former custom about it; it was rapidly developing into that temple of British middle-class mediocrity, a modern watering-place. It had, in the months of June, July, and August, nigger minstrels, a café chantant, and a promenade, with six bathing-machines and two donkeys; two new hotels had sprung up within the last two years, a sufficient sign of its prosperity. No, Pendragon was doing its best to forget its ancient superstitions, and even seemed to regard the "House of the Flutes" a little resentfully because of its reminder of a time when men scaled the rocks and stormed the walls, and fell back dying and cursing into their ships riding at anchor in the little bay.

Very different was Cullin's Cove, the little fishing-village that lay slightly to the right of the town. Here traditions were carefully guarded; a strict watch was kept on the outside world, and strangers were none too cheerfully received. Here, "down-along," was the old, the true Cornwall—a land that had changed scarcely at all since those early heathen days that to the rest of the world are dim, mysterious, mythological, but to a Cornishman are as the events of yesterday. High on the moor behind the Cove stand four great rocks—wild, wind-beaten, grimly permanent. It is under their guardianship that the Cove lies, and it is something more than a mere superstitious reverence that those inhabitants of "down-along" pay to those darkly mysterious figures. Seen in the fading light of the dying day,

when Cornish mists are winding and twisting over the breast of the moor, these four rocks seem to take a living shape, to grow in size, and to whisper to those that care to hear old stories of the slaughter that had stained the soil at their feet on an earlier day.

From Harry's windows the town and the sea were hidden. Immediately below him lay the tennis-lawns and the rose-garden, and, gleaming in the distance, at the end of the Long Walk, two white statues that had fascinated him in his boyhood.

His first waking thought on the morning after his arrival was to look for those statues, and when he saw them gleaming in the sun just as they used to do, there swept over him a feeling of youth and vigour such as he had never known before. Those twenty years in New Zealand were, after all, to go for nothing; they were to be as though they had had no existence, and he was to be the young energetic man of twenty-five, able to enter into his son's point of view, able to share his life and vitality, and, at the same time, to give him the benefit of his riper experience.

Through his open window came the faint, distant beating of the sea; a bird flew past him, a white flash of light; some one was singing the refrain of a Cornish "chanty"—the swing of the tune came up to him from the garden, and some of the words beat like little bells upon his brain, calling up endless memories of his boyhood.

He looked at his watch and found that it was nine o'clock. He had no idea that it was so late; he had asked to be called at seven, but he had slept so soundly that he had not heard his man enter with his shaving water; it was quite cold now, and his razors were terribly blunt. He cut himself badly, a thing that he scarcely ever did. But it was really

unfortunate, on this first morning when he had wanted everything to be at its best.

He came down to the breakfast-room humming. The house seemed a palace of gold on this wonderful September morning; the light came in floods through the great windows at the head of the stairs, and shafts of golden light struck the walls and the china potpourri bowls and flashed wonderful colours out of a great Venetian vase that stood by the hall door.

He found Garrett and Robin breakfasting alone; Clare and Sir Jeremy always had breakfast in their own rooms.

"I'm afraid I'm awfully late," said Harry cheerfully, clapping his brother on the back and putting his hand for a minute on Robin's shoulder; "things all cold?"

"Oh no," said Garrett, scarcely looking up from his morning paper. "Damned good kidneys!"

Robin said nothing. He was watching his father curiously. It was one of the Trojan rules that you never talked at breakfast; it was such an impossible meal altogether, and one was always at one's worst at that time of the morning. Robin wondered whether his father would recognise this elementary rule or whether he would talk, talk, talk, as he had done last night. They had had rather a bad time last night; Aunt Clare had had a headache, but his father had talked continuously—about sheep and Maories and the Pink Terraces. It had been just like a parish-room magic-lantern lecture—"Some hours with our friends the Maories"—it had been very tiring; poor Aunt Clare had grown whiter and whiter; it was quite a relief when dinner had come to an end.

Harry helped himself to kidneys and sat down by Robin, still humming the refrain of the Cornish song he had heard at his

window. "By Jove, I'm late—mustard, Robin, my boy—can't think how I slept like that. Why, in New Zealand I was always up with the lark—had to be, you know, there was always such heaps to do—the bread, old boy, if you can get hold of it. I remember once getting up at three in the morning to go and play cricket somewhere—fearful hot day it was, but I knocked up fifty, I remember. Probably the bowling was awfully soft, although I remember one chap—Pulling, friend of Durand's—could fairly twist 'em down the pitch—made you damned well jump. Talking of cricket, I suppose you play, Robin? Did you get your cap or whatever they call it—College colours, you know?"

"Oh, cricket!" said Robin indifferently. "No, I didn't play. The chaps at King's who ran the games were rather outers—pretty thoroughly barred by the decent men. None of the 'Gracchi' went in for the sports."

"Oh!" said Harry, considerably surprised. "And who the deuce are the 'Gracchi'?"

"A society I was on," said Robin, a little wearily—it was so annoying to be forced to talk at breakfast. "A literary society—essays, with especial attention paid to the New Literature. We made it our boast that we never went back further than Meredith, except, of course, when one had to, for origins and comparisons. Randal, who's coming to stop for a few days, was president last year and read some awfully good papers."

Harry stared blankly. He had thought that every one played cricket and football, especially when they were strong and healthy like Robin. He had not quite understood about the society—and who was Meredith? "I shall be glad to meet your friend," he said. "Is he still at Cambridge?"